

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for implanting a prosthetic device in a body comprising:

placing a first suture strand through tissue at a first position using a first needle of a suture system having ~~at least~~ more than three needles connected by suture strands;

placing a second needle of the suture system in the tissue at a distance from the first position, the second needle being attached to the first suture strand and a second suture strand having different indicators such that the first strand and the second strand can be identified, the second needle having a needle diameter at least as large as the diameter of the first suture strand added to the diameter of the second suture strand;

placing additional sutures using additional needles attached to the second needle through the tissue;

using more than three needles to insert the suture strands through the prosthetic device; and

using the suture strands having the indicators to secure the prosthetic device into position.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the first and second strands are of different colors.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the first suture strand is green and another suture strand is white.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein a third strand color is formed with a pair of braided strands of different colors.
5. (Currently Amended) A suture device for suturing a ~~prosthetic device~~ heart valve to tissue comprising:  
  
a plurality of more than three connected needles the connected needles, one of the plurality of needles being a first double stranded needle attached to a first suture strand, and a second suture strand at least said first suture strand having a visual indicator to distinguish the first suture strand from the second suture strand, the plurality of more than three connected needles including a first end needle attached to a single suture strand and a second end needled attached to single suture strand and further comprising a second double stranded needle attached to an end

of the second suture strand and an end of a third suture strand;

each suture strand extending between a pair of the connected needles such that suture strands attached to one of the plurality of needles can be distinguished with the visual indicator, the needles being removable from the suture strands after insertion through a ~~prosthetic device~~ cuff of a heart valve and the ends of each strand being identified and secured with another identified strand to attach the device to the tissue.

6. (Original) The suture device of claim 5 wherein the suture strands include strands of at least two different colors.
7. (Original) The suture device of claim 5 wherein the device has at least three needles that are each associated with at least two strands.
8. (Original) The suture device of claim 5 further comprising a first needle attached to a single strand and a last needle attached to a single strand and said at least one needle associated with at least two suture strands there between.

9. (Currently Amended) The suture device of claim 5 further comprising a plurality of suture pads such that each needle is attached to another needle with a suture strand having a pad attached to the suture strand, the suture pads defining the spacing between adjacent needle holes in the cuff of the heart valve.
10. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 5 wherein the prosthetic device further comprises a cuff through which suture strands are threaded.
11. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 5 wherein the prosthetic device comprises a valve.
12. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 5 further comprising a package for housing the suture device, the package having at least six needles.
13. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 5 further comprising a mechanical suture placement device.

14. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 5 wherein the prosthetic device comprises an aortic valve.
15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing one or more suture pads that are attached to the suture strands.
16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising passing the suture strands through a cuff of the prosthetic device.
17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising passing the different strands attached to the second needle through the same hole in the tissue at a second position, the second needle having a diameter larger than the strands that are attached to the second needle.
18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the prosthetic device comprises a valve.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising providing the suture system in a package.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising using a suture system having at least three needles attached by suture strands with alternating colors.

21. (Currently Amended) A method for implanting a ~~prosthetic device~~ heart valve in a body comprising:

inserting a first suture through tissue at a first position using a first needle of a suture system having at least three needles connected by suture strands;

inserting a second needle of the suture system, the second needle being attached to a suture strand and a second suture strand, the second needle being inserted through the tissue at a distance from the first position, the first suture strand and the second suture strand having different indicators such that the different strands attached to the second needle can be identified, the second needle having a diameter larger than the first suture strand and the second suture strand that are attached to the second needle;

inserting a third needle of the suture system through tissue, the third needle being attached to the second suture strand and a third suture strand;

inserting a fourth needle of the suture system through the tissue, the fourth needle being attached to the third suture strand; and

attaching a cuff of the ~~prosthetic~~ heart valve device to the tissue using the strands having the indicators.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the first suture strand and the second suture strand are of different colors.
23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the suture system has at least two double stranded needles attached to pairs of different colored strands.
24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the system has at least six needles connected by suture strands.
25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the step of inserting the second needle further comprises inserting the second needle through a single hole in the tissue such that the suture strands attached to the second needle extend through the single hole.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25 further comprising using the indicators to identify the strands extending through the single hole and select strands from adjacent holes in the tissue to secure the identified strands.
27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising using strands having at least three different colors to connect the needles in sequence.
28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising using pairs strands from different holes having identified indicators to secure the device.
29. (Currently Amended) A suture device for suturing a prosthetic device to tissue comprising:  
  
a plurality of at least seven needles connected by a plurality of at least six suture strands such that pairs of the suture strands attached to at least five of the needles have a visual indicator to distinguish the pairs of suture strands attached to each of the at least five needles, the



ends of each pair of suture strands being inserted into one of the at least five needles.

30. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 29 wherein the suture strands include strands of at least two different colors.
31. (Currently Amended) The suture device of claim 29 wherein the device has at least one braided suture using two suture strands having different colors.
32. (Previously Presented) The suture device of claim 29 further comprising a first needle attached to a first single suture strand and a last needle attached to a second single suture strand.
33. (New) The suture device of claim 29 wherein the at least six suture strands further comprise a first strand of a first color, a second strand of a second color different from the first color and a third strand of a third color that is different from the first color and the second color.

34. (New) The suture device of claim 33 wherein the third color comprises a strand of the first color braided with a strand of the second color.